

Message Text

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ACTION AF-18

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 SS-15 NSC-10 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10

NSAE-00 PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 L-03 RSR-01 /078 W

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R 110920Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6948

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 1815

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SU

SUBJ: SHANAAN TRIAL-THE CONCLUSION

REF: KHARTOUM 947 AND PREVIOUS

1. ACTION AGAINST BRIG ABDEL RAHIM SHANAAN FOR ALLEGED CONSPIRACY TO ASSISSINATE PRES NIMAIRI AND OTHER GOS LEADERS, WHICH BEGAN WITH BANG IN JANUARY AND HAS BEEN FIZZLING EVER SINCE, ENDED WITH QUIET POP AUG 10 WHEN PRESS ANNOUNCED FINAL SENTENCES. BRIG SHANAAN SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS IMPRISONMENT, ONE CO-DEFENDANT (PRIVATE IN ARMY) ALSO SENTENCED TO THREE YEARS AND DISMISSAL FROM ARMED FORCES, AND TWO OTHERS (ONE NCO AND ONE PRIVATE) SENTENCED TO ONE YEAR EACH AGAIN WITH DISMISSAL FROM ARMY. ALL OTHERS, INCLUDING SHANAAN'S SON, ACQUITTED.

2. COMMENT: LIGHTNESS OF SENTENCES PLUS FACT FIVE OUT OF NINE ACQUITTED TESTIFY CLEARLY TO WEAKNESS GSO CASE. OUTCOME HARDLY SURPRISE AND WAS IN FACT FORECAST BY LONG DELAY IN ANNOUNCING DECISION. (COURT MET MAY 8 IN LAST PUBLIC SESSION AND PRESS REPORTED MAY 15 THAT DECISION FORWARDED TO NIMAIRI FOR REVIEW. SINCE THEN SILENCE.) WE CAN ONLY SPECUALTE WHAT HAPPENED IN NEARLY THREE MONTHS SINCE THEM.

3. IF VERDICT AS NOW ANNOUNCED WAS THAT ORIGINALLY PRESENT TO NIMAIRI, IT QUITE LIKELY DID NOT PLEASE HIM AND HE MAY WELL HAVE TRIED (AS REPORTED BY OTHER
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SOURCES) TO GET COURT TO STIFFEN SENTENCES AND EVEN

REVOKE ACQUITTALS IN CERTAIN CASES. IF SO, HE HAD
ONLY MEASURED SUCCESS. IF NOTHING ELSE, SHANNAAN
AFFAIR SEEMS TO HAVE ENHANCED REPUTATION OF AND
ESTABLISHED SOME DEGREE OF IMPARTIALITY FOR SUDANESE
MILITARY JUSTICE. IN ALL OTHER RESPECTS, IT IS UNDOUBTEDLY
AN EMBARRASSING SITUATION AND AN AFFAIR WHICH MANY IN
GOVERNMENT NOW WISH HAD NOT BEEN ALLOWED SURFACE IN
FIRST PLACE. FRITTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: n/a
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 11 AUG 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: golinofr
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973KHARTO01815
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS FRITTS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: KHARTOUM
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t19730843/aaaabfmf.tel
Line Count: 69
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: KHARTOUM 947 AND PREVIOUS
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: golinofr
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 14 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <14-Jan-2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <04-Feb-2002 by golinofr>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SHANAAN TRIAL-THE CONCLUSION
TAGS: PINS, SU
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005